

7-Step Personalized Safety Plan

A violent act can happen without anybody knowing it is about to happen. People sometimes have to leave their homes without time to get things together for a safe and quick getaway. It doesn't always have to happen like this. If you can plan ahead, you can protect yourself and your kids before bad things happen. The following safety plan is a guide to help you help yourself and your family from domestic violence before and after a violent act takes place.

My Safety Plan

The following steps represent my plan for improving my safety and preparing ahead of time for the possibility of his or her violence toward the kids or me. I don't have control over someone's angry outbursts. I do have control over how I act to him or her and how to get my kids and myself to safety fast!

Step 1 Safety during a violent incident

Fill out those items that you want to work on or have completed BEFORE the incident occurs.

- A. If we are going to have an argument, I can try to move to a space that is safer like _____.

Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, and kitchen, near any weapons or in rooms that don't have a way out of the room.

- B. If it is not safe for me or my kids to stay, I can _____.

Practice how to get out safely, what doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use.

- C. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them _____ so I leave in a hurry.

- D. I can tell _____ and _____
About the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home or apartment.

- E. I can use _____ as my code word with my kids or my friends so they will know to call for help.

- F. I can teach my kids to use 911 when there is an emergency and we need to call the police or fire department.

- G. If I have to get out of my house or apartment, I can go _____ Or _____.

Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time. You can't be guaranteed
This person won't beat you or your kids again.

- H. I can teach my kids where to go so they will be safe like _____.

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave

People who are being beaten usually have to leave their house or apartment they share with the person who is beating them. It can be really hard to make the decision to leave. Sometimes, people have to leave to protect themselves or their kids. When people are forced to leave so they won't be hurt anymore, it has to be well planned so the person won't be beaten again. Many times the batterers will fight if they believe someone is leaving.

See the checklist at the end of this Safety Plan that lists things I need to gather so I can make a fast getaway or leave for safekeeping at someone's house or apartment.

- A. I will save a little money every week and put it in a place that only I know about.
- B. I can leave money and an extra set of key with _____ so I can leave in a hurry.
- C. I can get copies of as many important papers as I can find (such as birth certificates, naturalization Papers for myself and my kids, the kid's immunization record, our passports, bank account numbers, check books, savings books, driver's license, restraining orders, etc).
- D. I can leave clothes with _____.
- E. Other things I can do to get away are:

- F. The domestic violence program's hotline number is 911.
- The domestic violence shelter closest to my house is _____.
- I can seek shelter there 24 hours a day by calling _____.
- The closest telephone to my house or apartment is located at _____
If it is a payphone, I will always have change available in the house or hidden outside.
- I can keep change for phone calls with me all the time. I understand that if I use a telephone credit cards, the batterer can find out all the numbers I called after I left. To keep my calls private, I have to keep change with me or ask a friend to allow me to use their card when I first leave.
- G. I can check with _____ and _____
and _____ to see if they will let me stay with them or loan me some money.
- H. I need to sit down and review my safety plan every _____ so I will know the safest way to leave my house or apartment.
- Review dates:** 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
- I. I can go over my plan in my thoughts and in my house or apartment when the batterer is not there. When it is possible, I can practice it with my children.

Step 3: Safety in my own home or apartment

It can be really hard to leave a bad relationship. This step also can be dangerous if you do not plan ahead of time to get yourself and your kids in a safe area. Many times abusers believe they have lost control of the relationship and will go to great lengths to get back their control, including retaliation. A careful plan is needed to promote safety and avoid another violent incident.

Here are some things that can be done while the abuser still lives in the house or apartment.

- A. If my partner no longer lives with me, I can make decisions that will help me and my kids become safer in our house or apartment. Things I can do are:
- Change the locks on the doors and windows as soon as possible.
 - Change the phone number that is unlisted and in a different name.
 - Obtain a confidential post office box to keep my address confidential.
 - Replace the wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
 - Install a security system that includes additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against the doors, an electronic system, etc.
 - Install smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and buy fire extinguishers for each floor in my house or apartment.
 - Install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house or apartment.
- B. I can teach my children to _____ when I am not there.
- C. I can tell _____, _____,
And _____ about who has my permission to pick up my kids.
- D. I can teach my kids how to use the phone and make a collect call to me and to _____ if they are taken by someone who is not supposed to have them.
- E. I can tell _____, _____,
and _____ that my partner no longer lives with me or my kids and they should call the police if the person is near my home. I can provide a picture of my abuser to neighbors, school teachers, day-care and after-school providers so they will recognize the person if he or she appears at my house or the kid's school.

Step 4: Safety with a protective order

A. I can keep my protection order _____.

It should always be on your body, a purse, a book bag, a back pack, etc. If you change the bag, the order should always be the first thing that goes into the new bag.

B. If my abuser breaks the protection order I can _____.

C. If the police are not responsive, I can _____.

D. I can call _____, and _____ and _____ that I have an protective order on file against the abuser.

E. If my abuser destroys my protective order, I can always get another copy from the _____ District Court.

Step 5: Safety on the job and in public

A. I can call or tell _____, and _____ and _____ at work about my situation.

B. I can use voice mail, the receptionist or a co-worker to screen my calls at work.

C. When leaving work, I can _____.

D. If problems occur when I am driving home, I can _____.

E. If I use public transportation, I can _____.

F. I can also _____.

Step 6: Safety and drug or alcohol consumption

The use of any alcohol or other drug can reduce someone's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect themselves from an abuser. Furthermore, the abuser's use of alcohol or other drugs may give him or her an excuse to hit someone.

If drug or alcohol consumption has occurred in my relationship with my abuser, I can enhance my safety in these ways:

- A. If I am going to consume alcohol or other drugs, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- B. I can also _____ or _____.
- C. If my abuser is consuming alcohol or drugs, I can _____.
- D. To protect my children, I can _____.

The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be disastrous for a battered person, may hurt him or her relationship with the children who are involved and put him or her at a disadvantage in other legal actions with the abuser. Therefore, women should be aware of the potential losses involved when using illegal drugs.

Step 7: Safety and my emotional health

- A. If I feel depressed about being alone or pressured to return to a potentially bad situation, I can _____.
- B. When I have to communicate with my abuser in person or by phone, I can _____.
- C. I can try to use positive self-talk with myself and be assertive, but not aggressive, with others. I can tell myself that I don't deserve to be beaten whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- D. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
- E. I can call _____, and _____, And _____ as additional resources to support me.